

January 7, 1999

me in congratulating him as he is honored today with the "Lifetime Health Care Advocate Award" in Sacramento.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE SUAREZ,
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MADISON HEIGHTS

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mayor George Suarez who is resigning after 25 years of faithful and dedicated service to the City of Madison Heights and its residents.

Mayor Suarez has governed the City of Madison Heights almost half of its city's 44 year history, and under his leadership and guidance, their residents have benefitted from new and expanded facilities.

A senior citizen center, a district court building, a "state-of-the-art" police station, a branch library, a second fire station, and a nature center built in Friendship Woods that proudly bears the Suarez name, are just a few of his outstanding accomplishments.

In addition, George Suarez has served on innumerable boards and committees, not merely as a member, but as an active participant. And on a more festive note, Mayor Suarez had the honor of performing 1,925 wedding ceremonies.

Mr. Speaker, I have known and worked with Mayor Suarez from my very first term in the United States House of Representatives and have seen first-hand his community's development and progress. My staff and I have worked closely with the Mayor and his administration throughout the years, and we have always enjoyed a friendly and productive relationship.

Serving the public has been a priority in the life of George Suarez and indeed, it will continue as his title changes from Mayor to Commissioner. In November, he ran and won the seat as Oakland County Commissioner for the 24th District and will begin serving in January 1999.

As he reflected on his retirement, he said, "Although I'm stepping down as your Mayor, I plan to be an active part of the community for the foreseeable future, helping Madison Heights to continue to be the city of progress." I agree, and with a bit of a twist to an old saying—you can take the man out of Madison Heights, but you can't take Madison Heights out of the man.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me first, in thanking George Suarez for his friendship and all that he has accomplished for the residents of Madison Heights and second, to wish him good health and success in fulfilling his new assignment. We will miss you, Mayor Suarez.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING WILLIAM D. "BILL" FARR

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the most important pioneers of water development in Colorado history—William D. "Bill" Farr. Mr. Farr epitomizes the foresight of pioneering the water movement in Colorado. On January 11, 1999, W.D. Farr will receive the 1999 "Citizen of the West," award for his work on water issues for Colorado. This annual award is given to the person who exemplifies the spirit and determination of the western pioneer. W.D. Farr is recognized as a longtime leader and visionary in the area of water conservation and is also credited with pioneering the method for successful year round cattle feeding.

W.D. Farr was born in 1910 in Greeley, CO. He grew up managing his family's Crystal River Ranch in Carbondale, CO. The challenge of operating a ranch with a 13-mile irrigation ditch system, plus years of interest in water management, resulted in Farr's lifelong commitment to water policy. W.D. served as director of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District for more than 40 years, and was director and the first President of the Colorado Water and Power Development Authority.

W.D. Farr is additionally a renowned leader in the cattle industry. He served as a founder and director of the Colorado Cattle Feeders Association and a director and president of the American National Cattlemen's Association. His inestimable contributions to Colorado in both water and cattle are unequaled and we as a state owe a great deal to his efforts. Thank you W.D. Farr for all of your contributions to Colorado, and congratulations on receiving the "Citizen of the West" award, you truly deserve it!

U.S. IMMIGRATION COURT ACT

HON. BILL MCCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing legislation to establish a new United States Immigration Court. The title of the bill is the "United States Immigration Court Act of 1999." This bill would remove the immigration adjudication functions from the Justice Department and invest them in a new Article I court. The court would be composed of a trial division and an appellate division whose decisions would be appealable to the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

The system for adjudicating immigration matters has matured tremendously over the last 15 years. Special inquiry judges have become true immigration judges. The Board of Immigration Appeals has been greatly expanded, and the whole Executive Office for Immigration Review has been separated from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

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Yet much of this system, including the Board of Immigration Appeals, does not exist in statute. And while separated from the INS, aliens still take their cases before judges who are employed by the same department as the trial attorneys who are prosecuting them.

It is time to take the next logical step and create a comprehensive adjudicatory system in statute. Such a system should be independent of this Justice Department. This is not a new concept—in fact, I first introduced legislation to take this step back in 1982. I continue to believe that an Article I court would allow for more efficient and streamline consideration of immigration claims with enhanced confidence by aliens and practitioners in the fairness and independence of the process.

The bill introduced today provides a solid framework on which to build debate on this important and far-reaching reform. I look forward to working with all interested parties in fine-tuning and further developing this proposal where necessary and enacting this much needed reform. It is my hope to see real progress made on this matter and I urge my colleagues to support the United States Immigration Court Act of 1999.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PRISON SAFETY ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Prison Safety Act, a bill to assure the safety of the District of Columbia and other Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) inmates, who may be placed in private prison facilities, as well as the communities where the prisons are placed. This provision has become necessary as a result of § 11201 the 1997 District of Columbia Revitalization Act (P.L. 105-33). That bill requires that BOP house in privately contracted facilities at least 2000 D.C. sentenced felons by December 31, 1999 and at least 50 percent of D.C. felons by September 30, 2003. Under the Revitalization Act, the Lorton Correctional Complex is to be closed by December 31, 2001, and the BOP is to assume responsibility for the maintenance of the District's inmate population. My bill would give the Director of BOP the necessary discretion to decide whether to house D.C. inmates in private prison facilities, and if so, when and how many. This mandate would mark the first time that BOP has contracted for the housing of significant numbers of inmates in private facilities. The extremely short time frames were placed in the statute without any reference to the BOP capabilities, but rather, in order to meet the 6 year limit for the closure of Lorton. I am introducing this bill because recent events have driven home the necessity for informed expert judgement before decisions to contract out inmate housing are made.

On December 3, 1998, the Corrections Trustee for the District of Columbia released a report on the investigation of problems arising from the placement of D.C. inmates in the